

Talbot County Economic Development Commission
215 Bay Street, Suite 5
Easton, MD
June 5, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Chairman, Ted Bautz, Vice-Chairman, Geoff Oxnam, Peter Dunbar, John General, Haim Loran, Debbie Renshaw, Paul Makosky, Peter Dunbar, Walter Chase, Gerry O'Mara, Len Wendowski, and Erik Neil, Ph.D., Susan Hayward

Ex Officio Members Present: Corey W. Pack, Al Silverstein, and Terenda Thomas

Members Excused:

Attendees: Ed Vitalos, John McQuaid, Kelly Malone, Scott Warner, Laura Heikes, Tim Berrigan, Bill Rose, Ann Boarders, Jessica Morris, and Tracy Ward

Guest Speakers: Ed Vitalos and John McQuaid, from the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative, (ESRG), funded by the Regional Councils and located at Salisbury University, were invited to speak to the Commission regarding The Maryland Cooperative Broadband and their interconnectivity of the region. John McQuaid reported that he and Mr. Vitalos were hired with a grant from the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA), under the state broadband initiative goal, a complementary initiative to the Broadband Technology Opportunity Project (BTOP). The BTOP was focused on building a backbone and middle-mile capabilities throughout the country. The initiative was more focused on broadband mapping and capacity building and how those assets in the ground are being utilized. Mr. McQuaid shared maps generated by ESRGC for Talbot County (<http://www.mdbroadbandmap.org/map/>) to show coverage. Mr. McQuaid and Mr. Vitalos are out looking for opportunities to assist people who still need services by documenting their current broadband speed. They coordinate the need with the Internet Service Providers (Atlantic Broadband, Easton Utilities, Comcast, Verizon and others who can come up with the solution. Mr. McQuaid gave an example of a company who was working on large data files and did not have adequate service. They immediately reached out to an ISP, who had an interest in providing service to that southern region and the company had a solution and fiber within a couple of weeks. Mr. Vitalos reported that a lot of the topics that Jason Broadwater, CEO Revenflo and presenter at the 2014 Talbot County Awards Breakfast, addresses are actually happening in this area. Organizations are starting to transform how they operate and what they produce by using more bandwidth through the implementation of applications: doctors and families will be able to check in with patients; information will be exchanged in treating diseases, and cancer planning is a robust activity. Healthcare that used to outsource these kinds of programs will now be able to do it themselves easier and cheaper with broadband. Pharmaceutical companies will be providing mobile applications so they may track you and work with you regarding how effective your drug is working throughout your day. These applications are riding on the broadband backbone, which is already in place but must now be extended to the end users. With expanded broadband applications, schools will be able to support simultaneous training and testing; thousands of students taking the same test, all around the country, on the same day, at the same time. How to approach this will be difficult, because it will overwhelm the capacity of the network if not handled

properly. Another training mechanism being done today is “flipped classroom,” a form of blended learning in which students learn new content online by watching video lectures in class with teachers offering more personalized guidance and interaction with students, instead of lecturing. Mr. Vitalos and Mr. McQuaid are monitoring these innovative functions and the infrastructure that makes them available. Talbot County has a lot of pieces of that responsibility, but not a unified strategy or charter going forward. Cecil and Kent counties are putting together a unified strategy for broadband to address such issues like sparsely populated areas. The next step in the broadband build out is the mid-mile and last mile. A discussion ensued between commission members regarding what is involved in developing a county wide strategy and other questions. Geoff Oxnam reported that we have the infrastructure now to reach Google speeds. We have not approached the limit of the infrastructure that we currently have in place. Mr. Oxnam went over the map of Talbot County and explained the intricate path of internet into our homes and businesses. There is a network to all Talbot County schools at gigabyte speeds. It takes 17 to 25 homes, per wire-mile, just to break even on the cost of putting the internet technology on the poles or underground. It was recognized that a county-wide effort to develop a strategic plan would be important to the overall economic health of the county. Mr. Vitalos reported that the counties’ first step is to take an inventory by cataloging where the fiber is currently located and then prioritization of resources to reach homes. Corey Pack and Jessica Morris indicated that the next quarterly towns’ meeting is at the end of July and that this topic will be discussed with the Towns and representatives from the Maryland Broadband Cooperative.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Chairman Ted Bautz, in Conference Room 3, located at 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Easton, MD 21601. A quorum was present.

Agenda and Minutes: The director reported that correspondence, not on the agenda was received and she will indicate same on the June agenda before finalizing. The agenda for the June 5th Commission Meeting was approved pending correspondence. The meeting minutes from the May 1st Commission meeting was approved.

Correspondence: The director reported several memberships are coming due and notices were sent to the County Manager’s office to request feedback on whether current members, whose terms are coming to end, will be interested in being reconsidered. We heard from two members who will not be returning: Len Wendowski and Susie Hayward. The director, on behalf of the commission, recognized their services and hard work during their terms with a small gift as a token of appreciation. Ms. Hayward was recognized for working on the procurement project and Mr. Wendowski always brought the commission great news from the Town of Easton. Ted Bautz thanked them for their service and contributions.

Old Business: The director reported that the FY 15 budget, for the Talbot County Office of Economic Development, was approved including an increase in for marketing and contractual funds to hire a part-time person to support the ED office. This budget is a tremendous vote of encouragement for the activity of the EDO from the County Council. Other business included the director’s request for approval of Friday, April 24, 2015 for next year’s Business Appreciation Breakfast. The motion carried. Work continues on the Real Property Tax Credit Amendment, Talbot County Bill 837. There was correspondence with county attorney, Michael Pullen and

Assistant County Manager, Jessica Morris to prepare the draft which was reviewed by council, and favorably accepted. Ms. Morris indicated that Mr. Pullen had a couple of questions for the finance director before finalizing, and anticipates the bill will be introduced in the June 17th or July 8th meeting. The commission members will be kept apprised of this activity as the process includes a public hearing and then a vote on the bill.

New Business: The director reported that the EDC meetings beginning in September will be held in the towns of Trappe, St. Michaels, Oxford and Easton. The commission is required by law to advertise these meetings well in advance and locations will be identified. The commission will not meet in July. The Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) Summer Conference will be on June 12th in Prince George's County and the program will focus on Healthcare IT. The director recognized that Tracy Ward, from the Easton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC), was in attendance today. There was discussion about Ms. Ward speaking to the EDC, with a brief overview at the August meeting. There are a couple of vacancies in the Commission; members are offered to make recommendations to the County Council for their consideration. The towns have their own transition. The director welcomed Kelly Malone, Easton Town Council, who will be taking over for Len Wendowski, Town of Easton.

Business Environment Committee: Ted Bautz, Chairman, reported the committee is making significant progress. Between Easton, the County and Easton Utilities there is cooperation with flow charts and an analysis of the permit process. The county is focusing on workflow, culture change initiatives and being responsive to citizens. The committee is looking at the potential of integrating the software platforms, at least from the user interface, so it is easier to navigate the permit process. It looks like the county will be the lead-out with the MUNIC System, software for the public sector that provides an interactive platform with the public for the permitting process. Beta testing is being conducted in July. The town of Easton is in process with having their permitting process certified by a national organization. The Business Environment Committee will meet again on June 24th at 9:30 at the county offices located at 215 Bay Street.

Marketing Committee: Haim Loran, Chairman, referred to the Business Survey, developed by the committee and in final edits that will be mailed to 400 existing businesses in Talbot County, with over 10 employees. This survey is needed to understand how businesses perceive Talbot County as a place to do business and what we need to do, if anything, to attract new businesses. The feedback will be evaluated to ascertain if there are any misperceptions or legitimate needs that may be brought to the County Council for consideration. The committee is looking for businesses that fit our profile, as previously determined during a meeting with the County Council, and has identified test labs as a good opportunity for attraction. They will be putting together a targeted mailing to testing labs. Testing labs are small companies, led by engineers, who are not dependent by industry sectors. The director arranged a meeting yesterday with Thomas Dan, Director of Maryland Venture Fund, and Mr. Loran reported they gained an understanding of their criteria for investment, which may come to good use. Peter Dunbar reported that Oxford is working with a Maryland Geological survey, up in Baltimore, to establish a similar materials test lab and the lab has all the equipment they need; however, they cannot find a Ph.D. geochemist to staff the lab.

Director's Report: The director reported that she distributed the press release announcing Trident's expansion at the Easton Airport and a contract to train 320 naval cadets with a \$1 million impact to the town. Bob Wood, former Cooperative Oxford Lab Director, has accepted a new position with NOAA, responsible for monitoring climate change. Suzanne Skelley has been named the new Director. Calhoon MEBA Engineering School is investing in a 3.4 acre solar farm. Ms. Thomas will update us regarding the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's (DLLR) Resource Providers meeting and how they are going to conduct visits with companies. The director reported that she met with Jamy Bowen, Allen Harim Family Foods in Cordova and a network opportunity was provided with a local engineering company who provides waste water treatment technology. The EDO office also visited with Verdant Griffin to discuss growth issues and space requirements. Aphena Pharma has completed their internal expansion with the county and is working with the town and the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) on a second project. Scheduled for follow-up visits are Kangde Xin, Celeste and Wildlife International. The EDO is working with 2 start-up projects that involve proprietary technology; the chocolate manufacturer is back in town, interested in a second phase investment to facilitate relocation and expansion. Scott Ackerson and Dr. Halasa represent 2 existing entrepreneurs interested in developing project scopes. In addition to the meeting with Tom Dann, Director, DBED Challenge Investment Fund, the EDO hosted a meeting with Josh Neiman, from MEDCO. MEDCO manages real estate and investment for the state and toured the area for potential opportunities.

Walter Chase, Town of Trappe: Mr. Chase reminded us that Mitchums Steakhouse had closed, as well as the Deli. The Pizza Co. is still open and so is the Hidden Gem. On June 21st, Trappe will host Family Friends Day at the Rural Life Museum from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon with an exhibit that honors World War II Veterans. On June 26th, 27th, and 28th Trappe will host the Farm Carnival with a parade on June 28th. The Trappe Council approved the town's budget at their monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 4th and Mr. Chase will be continue as an EDC member for another term. **Susie Hayward, Real Estate:** reported that April 2013 was a very strong month and by comparison, sales for residential real estate had dropped off for April 2014 with the number of sales in decline. The current housing inventory remains high.

Numbers for April 2014:

	Listed	Sold
Talbot Co	613	44
Easton	279	27
Oxford	49	0
St. Michaels	89	5
Tilghman	34	3
Trappe	46	2

A discussion ensued regarding the rental market, which is growing, as younger career people want to keep their options flexible. In some categories, there is not enough inventory and the higher dollar homes are being rented as well. **Len Wendowski, Town of Easton:** reported that the trees at Mistletoe will be cut, eventually with approval from the Town Council. The town is putting in dry retention ponds; the first one will be by Rails to Trails off of Dover Street. Dick's Sporting

Goods is underway and Harris Teeter may not begin until next year. Quality Health Strategies internet infrastructure is being coordinated with Easton Utilities and the town. The hospital is moving six units into the Cadmus building on June 19th. The hospital has asked that no activity be taken on the Certificate of Need through the end of this year which delays the construction of the new Regional Medical Center until 2018. **John General, Small Business:** reported that Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST) Bus received word from the Maryland Transportation Administration (MTA) that they are flat funded for this year. Easton Utilities is supporting the marketing effort by running MUST's 30-second promo on all their cable channels. MUST is going to survey riders, as well as non-riders to further document need and capacity in the system. Mr. Silverstein suggested they work with Partners in Care and take a look at their data. **Al Silverstein, Chamber of Commerce:** reported that there are a number of new start-ups. Mr. Silverstein met with a gentleman in St Michaels who opened three new businesses. Business owners, from diverse businesses, large and small have all shared that this year was the toughest winter in a long time. The Chamber Partners in Education Committee has signed on with a program called "Choices." The program will be delivered to eighth-graders at all public school districts. The program is looking for volunteers to train them to speak with the students about choices of employment opportunities, and their choice to stay in school. The Fishing Tournament will take place at Harrison's on June 27th. The Chamber is partnered with Hope for the Warriors, a non-profit group out of Virginia and Bob Pascal is making his property available to support sponsorship six veterans. The Maryland Competitive Initiative was developed to assemble information to illustrate what needs to be done to make Maryland more competitive. A Voters Forum for September has been discussed. **Paul Makosky, Member at Large:** no report. **Gerry O'Mara, Agriculture:** reported that there is still a great deal of misinformation out there regarding GMO crops and referred the commission to an article in the Washington Post yesterday, indicating concern with GMO crops. Mr. O'Mara reported that over the last 10 - 15 years 90%+ of the field corn and soy beans, grown in the country, are GMO crops, which means there has been an incredible exposure; therefore, if this really was a big health concern, we would be seeing a lot more people having health problems. **Kelly Malone, Town of Easton:** reported that she looks forward to representing the Town of Easton in August. **Debbie Renshaw, Town of St. Michaels:** reported that St. Michaels' front streets looks good with store fronts occupied and active. St Michaels is entering an agreement with Eastern Shore Land Conservancy to redevelop Freemont Street, as a greenway and the secondary commercial zone for St. Michaels' commercial activity. The town has applied for block grant money to purchase the building where the community center to give the center a permanent home. The town is working on their final phase of street and sewer upgrades, in cooperation with Talbot County. The State Highway just finished repaving Talbot Street however; they did not put in crosswalks, which presented the town with problems during high-traffic events. Ms. Renshaw suggested that the County Council needs to work with the towns with regard to the village plans. The changes that they make in the village zones, affects the towns and they would like to be involved in the discussions. Ms. Renshaw requested that the EDC to look into grant opportunities because it is very difficult for the towns' small staff to determine what grants are available that would help us with economic development in our towns and counties. **Peter Dunbar, Town of Oxford:** reported that Oxford has done research regarding grant opportunities and would be happy to share their information with St. Michaels. Oxford has gotten a couple of bids back on the waste water system and they are presently under evaluation. They received another set of bids back for

the county land regarding the passive park. They also received a dog park grant. Mr. Dunbar suggested we have a working session regarding broadband and preparing a county-wide strategy.

Corey Pack, Liaison to County Council: reported that Martin Sokolich and Sandy Coyman held three meetings, one in Tilghman, one in Easton and one in St. Michaels regarding the tier map legislation. The meetings were very well attended and they received many comments and options. A lot of these villages would not sustain any large commercial sites because they do not have the water and sewer infrastructure. With regard to the passive park in Oxford, the RCA property in Easton is a good example of what this will look like with no ball fields; it is a park where you can relax, walk a dog or throw a Frisbee. Invitations to the Council's quarterly meeting with the towns will be sent out with a date in July and the main topic will be to discuss broadband and internet connectivity. The council favorably reviewed the amendment to Bill 737, the tax credit bill that the commission presented and will meet with the financial director, Angela Lane, to review further. The MUNIS[®] System is being implemented in the Department of Planning and Permits as a transparent tracking system for the public and to provide better customer service. The system is in beta test for July and expected to be available soon. With regard to the tree obstructions at the airport, we are thankful to the Town of Easton for their favorable vote to allow that conservation plan to be approved. The county has worked internally to upgrade the website which should be finalized next week with greater clarity and efficiency. Talbot County is the first country that has a virtual traffic map with real time on their system as demonstrated by the Emergency Services and helpful in case of emergencies or disasters. The Council will receive a presentation on June 17th from Ken Kozel, President, University of Maryland, Shore Regional Health, and the towns should have received their invitations to attend that meeting. The council will be going on a farm tour with Shannon Dill in the near future.

Geoff Oxnam, Vice Chairman and Easton Utilities: reported that the internet business at Easton Utilities is growing, both residential and business. Easton Utilities will be at both the MML and MACo conferences this year with displays to talk about some of the technological advantages that are being offered in Easton. Easton Utilities is excited to be involved in the permitting process and are dedicating staff resources to this project. The Junior Achievement project continues to expand with more students taught this year than in the first three years together. They are still working towards building a permanent facility to teach financial literacy and other key areas for our students.

Terenda Thomas, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR): reported that the State of Maryland and DLLR Business Services Unit had put together a Business Service Institute. The Chambers, Economic Development Offices and Department of Social Services were included. The Business Service Institute is operated as a consortium and considered a one-stop operator with quarterly meetings and each of the five counties participating. According to the web based the Maryland Workforce Exchange (www.mwejobs.gov), there were 74 job orders placed by employers in 2013 and this year was 206 job orders placed, attributed to the expanded capacity in the office and the hiring of 2 job developers. Consequently, a year ago they made 1,005 referrals to employers and this year they made 2,144 referrals. Traffic in some of the regional offices has diminished and the office will explore this further as there are many people looking for employment. The DLLR Job Center will host another workshop for businesses that are amenable to hiring ex-offenders and provide more information on the resources available. The states Vet100, is a concerted effort to hire veterans with an interactive map for those employers who are interested.

Scott Warner, Executive Director, Mid Shore Regional Counsel: Thanked the director for having Mr. Vitalos and Mr.

McQuaid speak to the commission today. Mr. Vitalos and Mr. McQuaid facilitated a webinar on franchise agreements and invited all the counties and towns to learn more about negotiating these arrangements. Please log on the website, www.MDbroadbandmap.org and register your internet usage. **Laura Heikes and Tim Berrigan, Talbot Bank | Shore Bancshares:** reported that they are available to assist with any initiatives underway.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Economic Development Commission Meetings are held at 8:00 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month. The meetings are open to the public. The next meeting will be held on August 7th at 215 Bay Street, Suite 5, Conference Room #1, Easton, MD.

Maryland Broadband Map [MDbroadbandmap.org](http://www.MDbroadbandmap.org)

Veterans Employment and Training Service www.dol.gov/vets/vets-100.html

Rural Maryland Council <http://rural.maryland.gov>

Connect America Fund www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/connecting-america

Maryland Upper Shore Transit (MUST Bus) www.mustbus.org

Revised Impact Fee Study

A public meeting was held in the Council Chambers on January 21st, 2014 to discuss revisions to the Impact Fee Study. Please click here for a copy of the revised document.

<http://www.town-eastonmd.com/TempMedia/Impact%20Fee%20Study%2021Jan14.pdf>

Aday Remus: Jason Broadwater's Development Tool: <https://adayremus.com>

To view the Proposal to Amend Nutrient Management Regulations, along with the Extension Bulletin to be incorporated by reference in the Maryland Nutrient Management Manual:

<http://mda.maryland.gov/Pages/Proposed-Regulations.aspx>

A fact sheet "AgBrief: Phosphorous Management Tool - An Overview of the Proposed Regulations" is also available online at:

http://mda.maryland.gov/Documents/ag_brief/AgBrief_PMT_092013.pdf

The Maryland Workforce Exchange and labor market information are available online at

<https://mwejobs.maryland.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.